

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

SUB A1

SUB A1  
SUB C2

SUB C3

1. A method for managing an electronic record in a distributed computing environment, comprising the steps of:
  - creating an electronic tag that uniquely identifies an electronic record;
  - storing the electronic tag; and
  - distributing the electronic record.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of purging the electronic record comprising the steps of deleting the electronic record and selectively deleting the electronic tag.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the storing step further comprises the step of storing the electronic record.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the distributing step further comprises the step of selectively determining whether the recipient may purge the electronic record.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the distributed computing environment comprises computers having a registry and a user profile, wherein the creating step comprises the steps of:
  - analyzing a network user's workstation specifications;
  - analyzing a network user's user profile; and
  - generating a reference code, wherein the electronic tag is generated from information analyzed in the network user's workstation specification, the network user's user profile, and the reference code.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the creating step further comprises the steps of:  
reading stored electronic tags; and  
generating an electronic tag in response to accessing an electronic record.
7. The method of claim 5, wherein the generating step further comprises the steps  
of reading the electronic record.
8. The method of claim 5, wherein the reference code comprises a classification  
code and an index code.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the classification code is selected from a group  
comprising business email, personal email, intramail, bulletin board, minutemail, and  
purgemail.
10. The method of claim 8, wherein the index code identifies the contents of an  
electronic record and the sender or recipient of the electronic record.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic record is an email message.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the distributing step comprises the steps of:  
reading the electronic tag; and  
generating a new electronic tag based on the electronic tag, wherein the  
generating step comprises the steps of reading a network user's workstation  
specifications, reading a network user's user profile, and generating a reference code.

SUB A27

13. An apparatus for managing electronic records on a in a distributed computing environment, the apparatus comprising:  
a computer system comprising at least one processor and at least one memory, the computer system being adapted and arranged for:  
creating an electronic tag that uniquely identifies an electronic record;  
storing the electronic tag; and  
distributing the electronic record.

SUB C7

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the computer system is further adapted and arranged for purging the electronic record wherein the computer system deletes the electronic record and selectively deletes the electronic tag.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the computer system is further adapted and arranged for selectively determining whether the recipient may purge the electronic record.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the distributing computing environment comprises computers having a registry and a user profile, wherein the computer system is configured and arranged for:  
analyzing a network user's workstation specifications;  
analyzing a network user's user profile; and  
generating a reference code, wherein the electronic tag is generated from information analyzed in the network user's workstation specification, the network user's user profile, and the reference code.

SUB A37

17. An article of manufacture for managing electronic records in a distributed computing environment, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable storage medium having a computer program embodied therein that causes the computer network to perform the steps of:

creating an electronic tag that uniquely identifies an electronic record;  
storing the electronic tag; and  
distributing the electronic record.

SUB C9

18. The article of claim 17, further comprising the step of purging the electronic record comprising the steps of deleting the electronic record and selectively deleting the electronic tag.

19. The article of claim 17, wherein the storing step further comprises the step of storing the electronic record.

SUB C10

20. The article of claim 17 wherein the distributing step further comprises the step of selectively determining whether the recipient may purge the electronic record.

21. The article of claim 17, wherein the distributed computing environment comprises computers having a registry and a user profile, wherein the creating step comprises the steps of:  
analyzing a network user's workstation specifications;  
analyzing a network user's user profile; and  
generating a reference code, wherein the electronic tag is generated from information analyzed in the network user's workstation specification, the network user's user profile, and the reference code.

C10  
C02

22. The method of claim 17, wherein the creating step further comprises the steps of:
- reading stored electronic tags; and
- generating an electronic tag in response to accessing an electronic record.